MARVEL
17th Dec. 88
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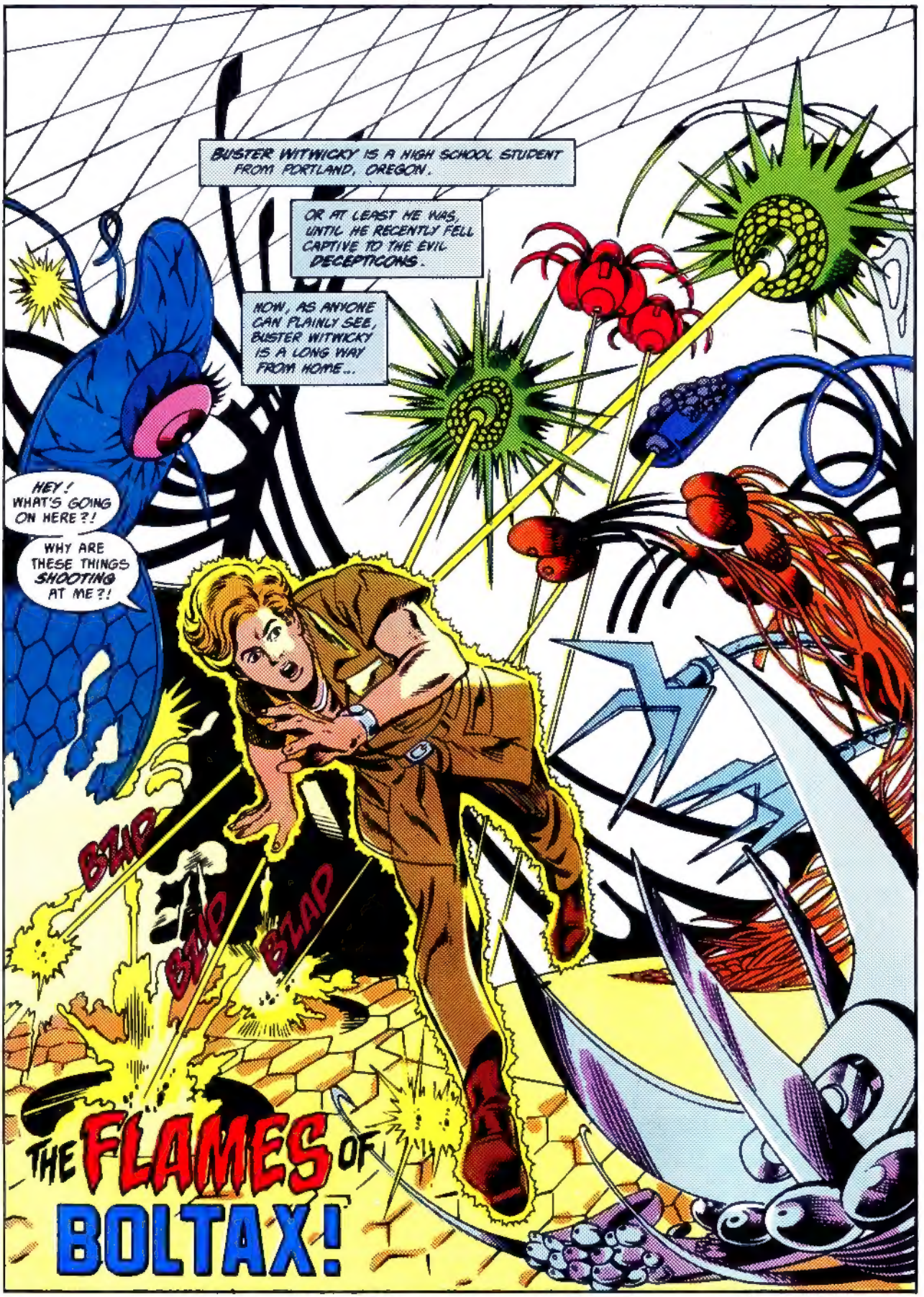
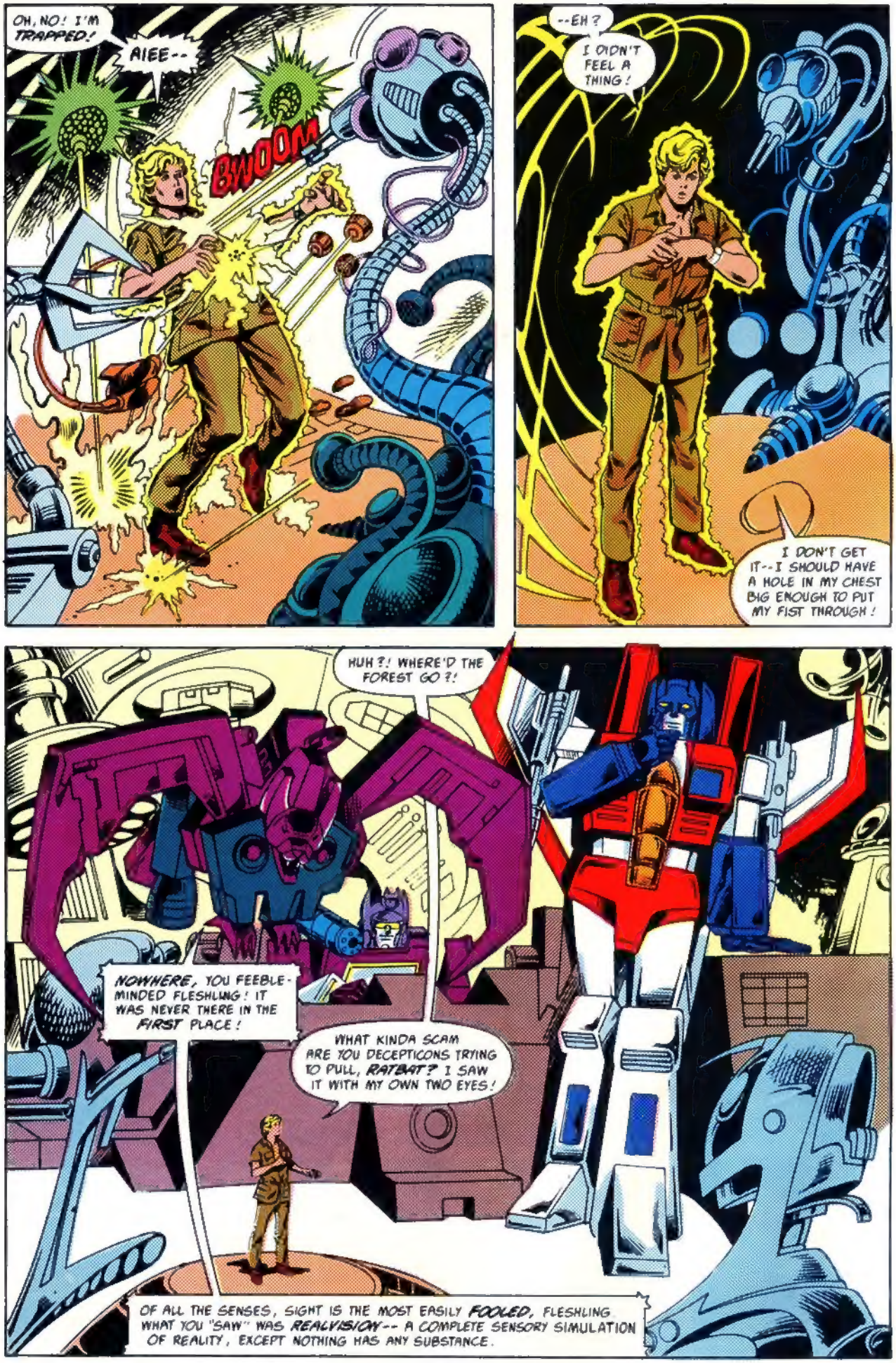
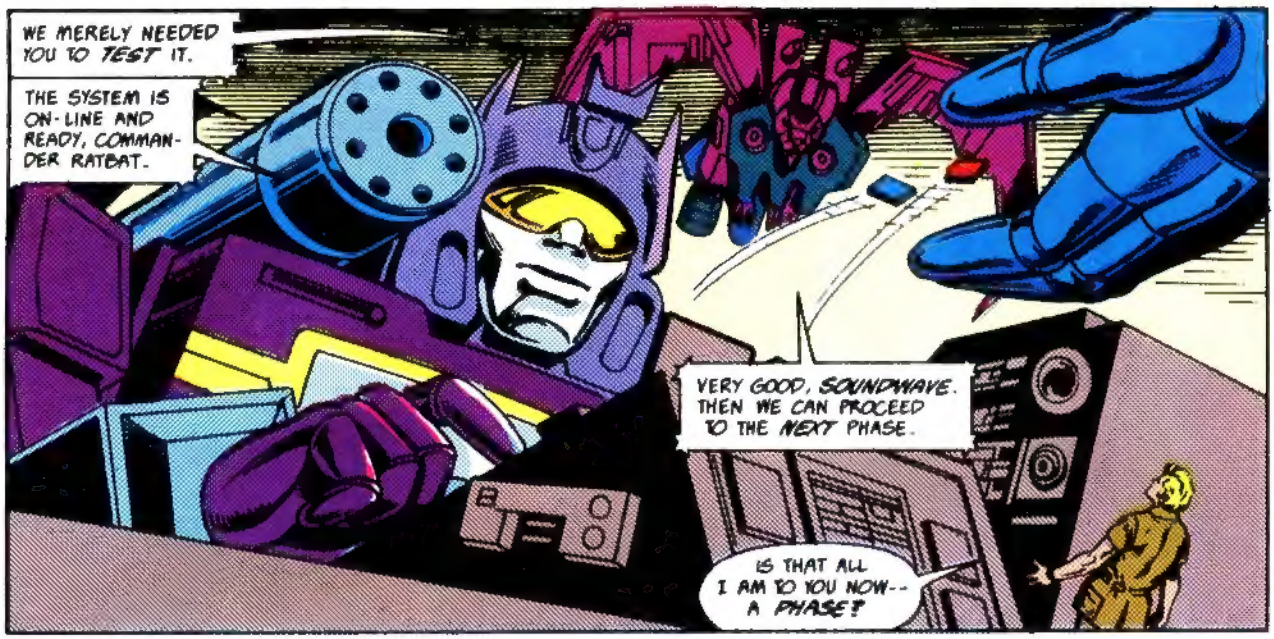
U.S.$1.45 CAN.$1.85
THE TRANSFORMERS™
and
ACTION FORCE™
THEY JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND, DOGFIGHT...
IT'S A JUNGLE OUT HERE!

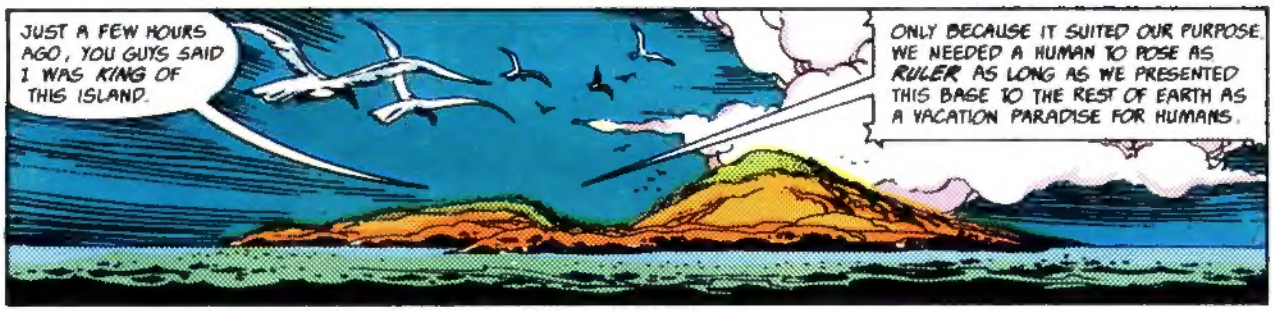
TRANSFORMERS™


BUSTER WITWICKY IS A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT FROM PORTLAND, OREGON.
OR AT LEAST HE WAS, UNTIL HE RECENTLY FELL CAPTIVE TO THE EVIL DECEPTICONS.
NOW, AS ANYONE CAN PLAINLY SEE, BUSTER WITWICKY IS A LONG WAY FROM HOME...
HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!
WHY ARE THESE THINGS SHOOTING AT ME?!
BZZP
BZZP
BZAP
THE FLAMES OF BOLTAX!

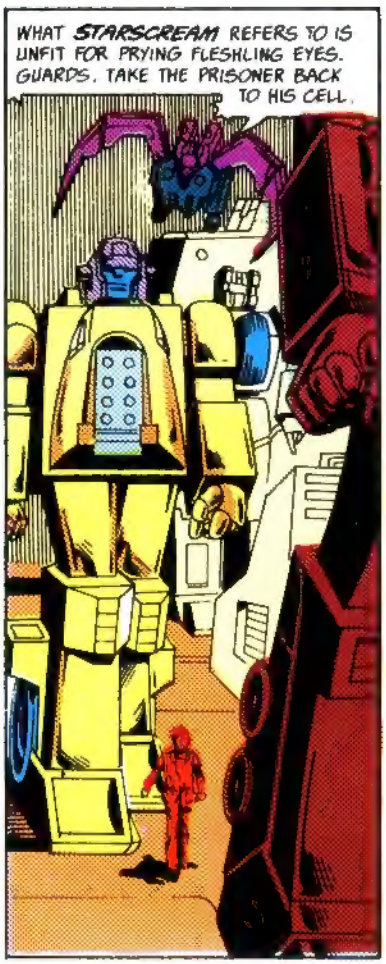
Script **BOB BUDIANSKY** ■ Pencils **JOSE DELBO** ■ Inks **DANNY BULANADI** ■ Letters **BILL OAKLEY** ■ Colour **NEL YOMTOV**

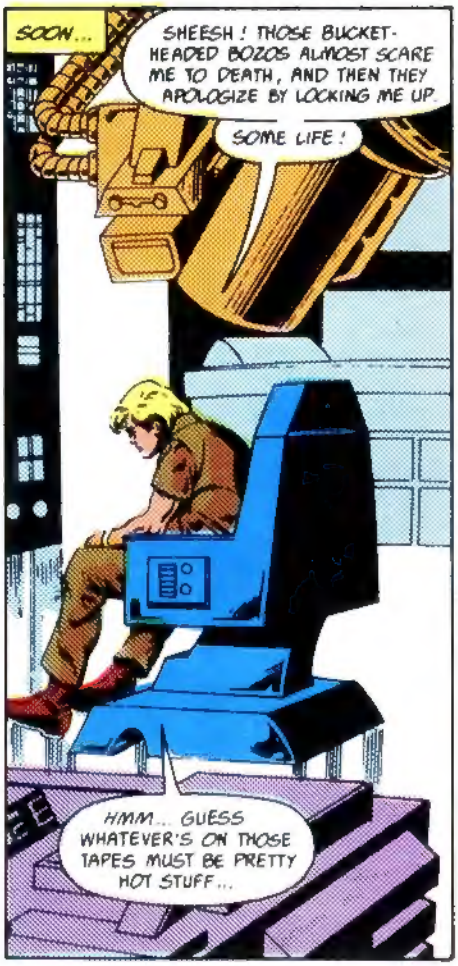

OH, NO! I'M TRAPPED!
AIEE--
BYOOM
--EH?
I DIDN'T FEEL A THING!
I DON'T GET IT--I SHOULD HAVE A HOLE IN MY CHEST BIG ENOUGH TO PUT MY FIST THROUGH!
HUH?! WHERE'D THE FOREST GO?!
NOWHERE, YOU FEEBLE-MINDED FLESHLING! IT WAS NEVER THERE IN THE FIRST PLACE!
WHAT KINDA SCAM ARE YOU DECEPTICONS TRYING TO PULL, RATBAT? I SAW IT WITH MY OWN TWO EYES!
OF ALL THE SENSES, SIGHT IS THE MOST EASILY FOOLED, FLESHLING. WHAT YOU "SAW" WAS REALVISION-- A COMPLETE SENSORY SIMULATION OF REALITY, EXCEPT NOTHING HAS ANY SUBSTANCE.

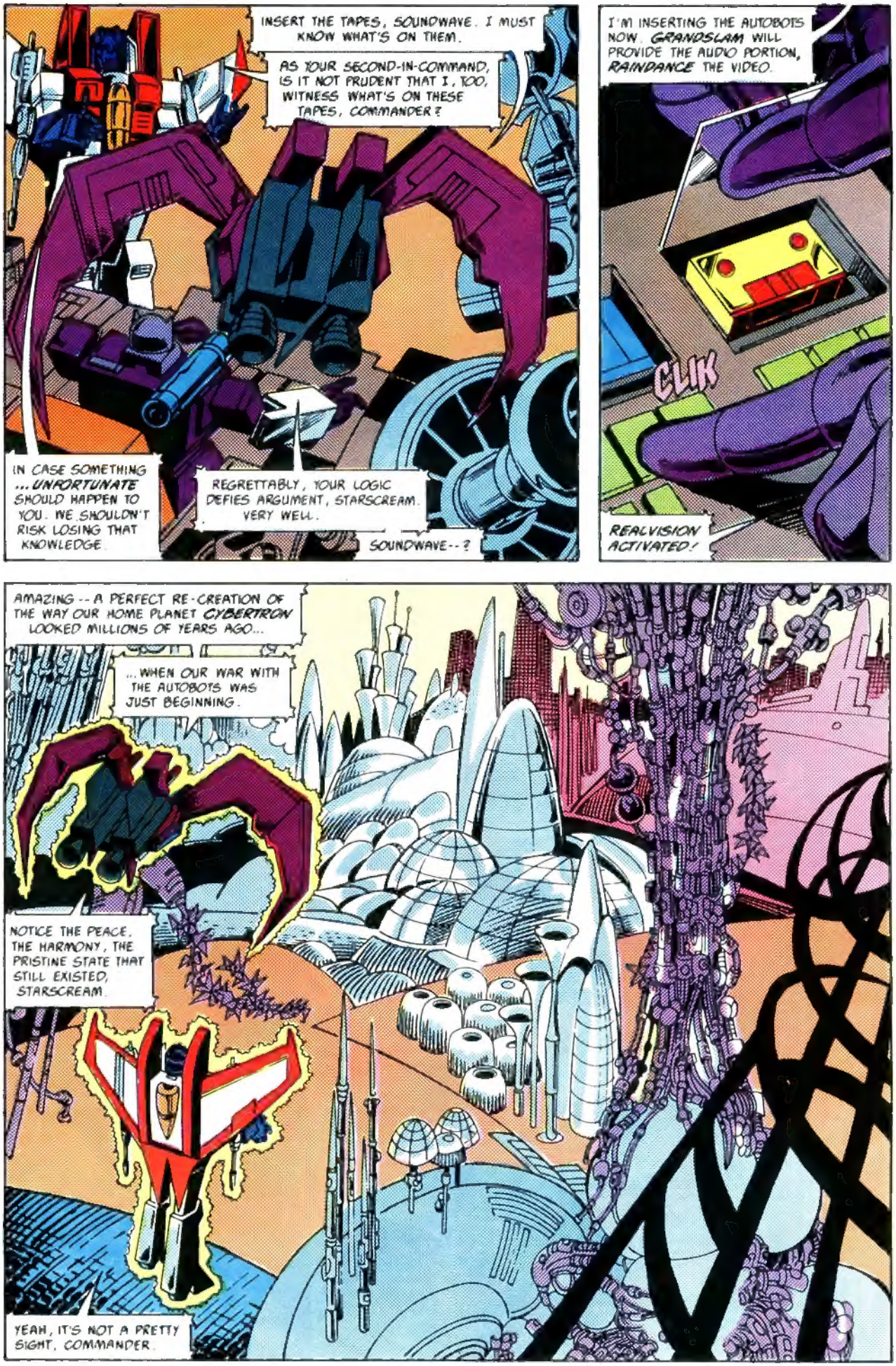

WE MERELY NEEDED YOU TO TEST IT.
THE SYSTEM IS ON-LINE AND READY, COMMANDER RATBAT.
VERY GOOD, SOUNDWAVE. THEN WE CAN PROCEED TO THE NEXT PHASE.
IS THAT ALL I AM TO YOU NOW-- A PHASE?

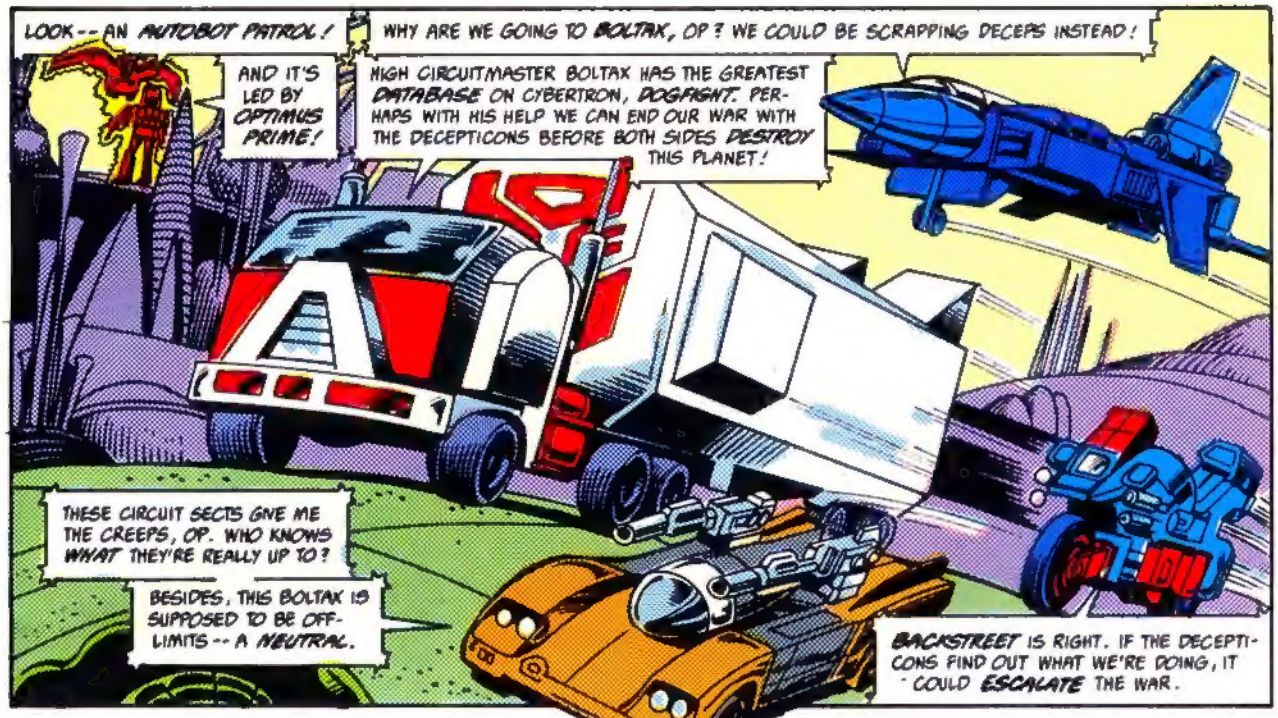

JUST A FEW HOURS AGO, YOU GUYS SAID I WAS KING OF THIS ISLAND.
ONLY BECAUSE IT SUITED OUR PURPOSE. WE NEEDED A HUMAN TO POSE AS RULER AS LONG AS WE PRESENTED THIS BASE TO THE REST OF EARTH AS A VACATION PARADISE FOR HUMANS.

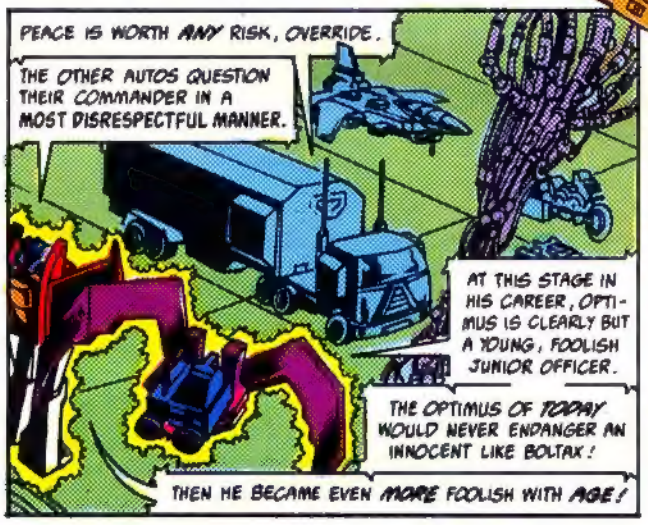
DUE TO THE INTERFERENCE OF THE AUTOBOT BLASTER,* THAT NEED NO LONGER EXISTS.
BE THANKFUL THAT YOU STILL DO!
WE INSTALLED REALVISION TO LOOK AT THOSE CAPTURED AUTOBOT TAPES. LET'S GET ON WITH IT!
GREAT! I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING 'EM!
*SEE LAST ISSUE

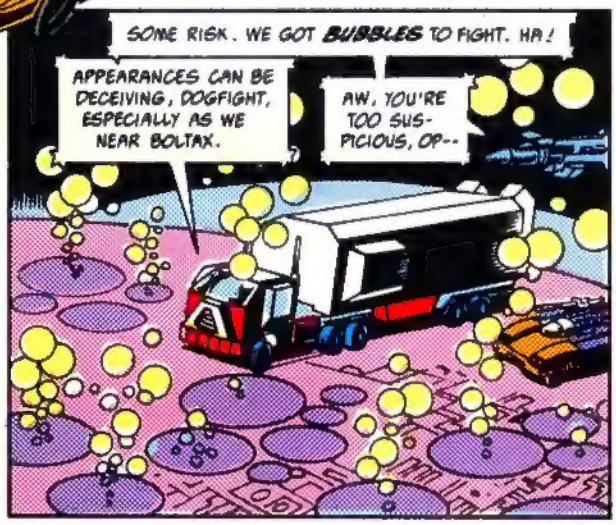

WHAT STARSCREAM REFERS TO IS UNFIT FOR PRYING FLESHLING EYES. GUARDS. TAKE THE PRISONER BACK TO HIS CELL.

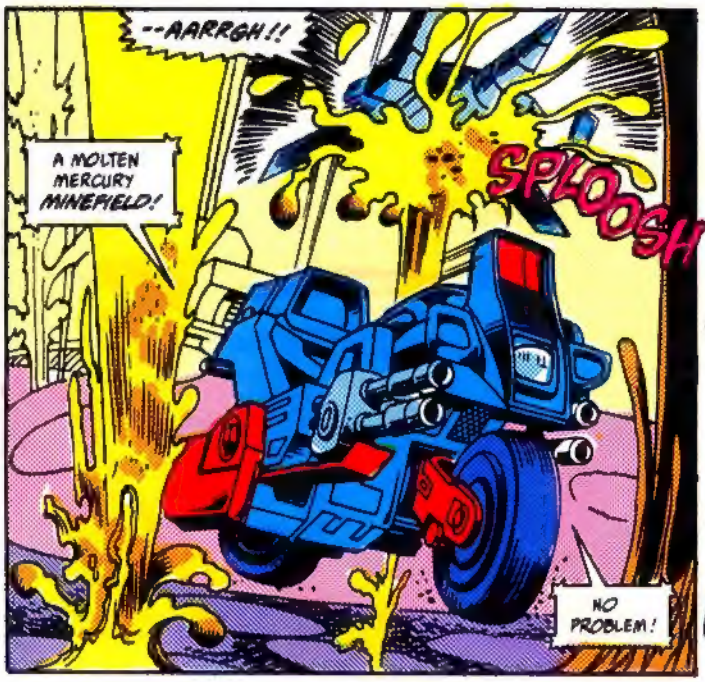

SOON...
SHEESH! THOSE BUCKET-HEADED BOZOS ALMOST SCARE ME TO DEATH, AND THEN THEY APOLOGIZE BY LOCKING ME UP.
SOME LIFE!
HMM... GUESS WHATEVER'S ON THOSE TAPES MUST BE PRETTY HOT STUFF...

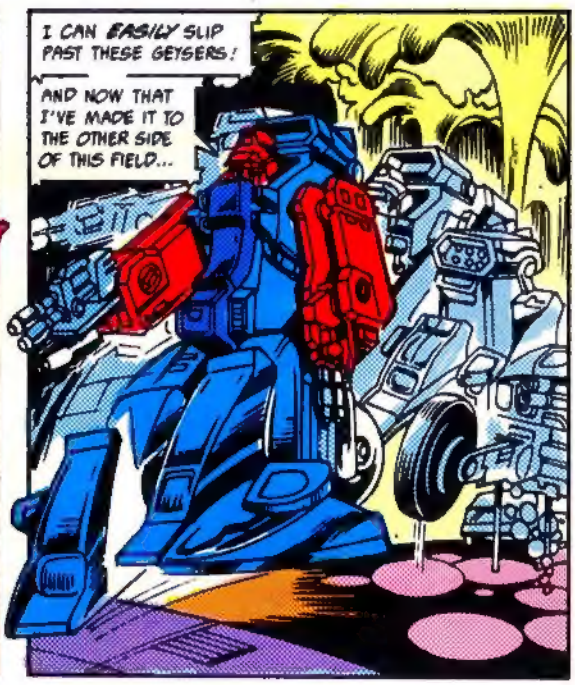

INSERT THE TAPES, SOUNDWAVE. I MUST KNOW WHAT'S ON THEM.
AS YOUR SECOND-IN-COMMAND, IS IT NOT PRUDENT THAT I, TOO, WITNESS WHAT'S ON THESE TAPES, COMMANDER?
IN CASE SOMETHING ...UNFORTUNATE SHOULD HAPPEN TO YOU. WE SHOULDN'T RISK LOSING THAT KNOWLEDGE.
REGRETTABLY, YOUR LOGIC DEFIES ARGUMENT, STARSCREAM. VERY WELL.
SOUNDWAVE--?
I'M INSERTING THE AUTOBOTS NOW. GRANDSLAM WILL PROVIDE THE AUDIO PORTION, RAINDANCE THE VIDEO.
CLIK
REALVISION ACTIVATED!
AMAZING -- A PERFECT RE-CREATION OF THE WAY OUR HOME PLANET CYBERTRON LOOKED MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO...
...WHEN OUR WAR WITH THE AUTOBOTS WAS JUST BEGINNING.
NOTICE THE PEACE, THE HARMONY, THE PRISTINE STATE THAT STILL EXISTED, STARSCREAM.
YEAH, IT'S NOT A PRETTY SIGHT, COMMANDER.

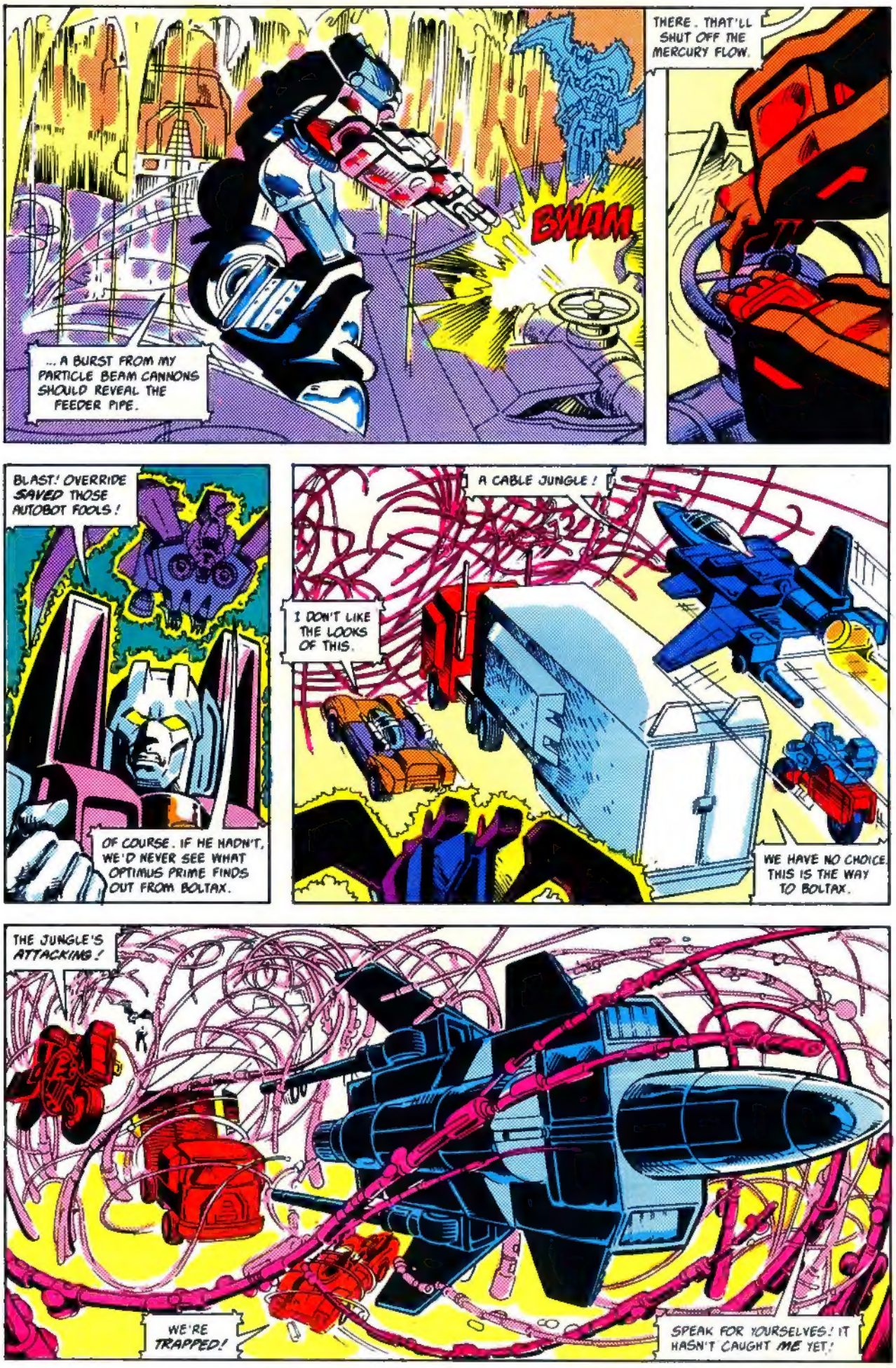

LOOK -- AN AUTOBOT PATROL!
AND IT'S LED BY OPTIMUS PRIME!
WHY ARE WE GOING TO BOLTAX, OP? WE COULD BE SCRAPPING DECEPS INSTEAD!
HIGH CIRCUITMASTER BOLTAX HAS THE GREATEST DATABASE ON CYBERTRON, DOGFIGHT. PERHAPS WITH HIS HELP WE CAN END OUR WAR WITH THE DECEPTICONS BEFORE BOTH SIDES DESTROY THIS PLANET!
THESE CIRCUIT SECTS GIVE ME THE CREEPS, OP. WHO KNOWS WHAT THEY'RE REALLY UP TO?
BESIDES, THIS BOLTAX IS SUPPOSED TO BE OFF-LIMITS -- A NEUTRAL.
BACKSTREET IS RIGHT. IF THE DECEPTICONS FIND OUT WHAT WE'RE DOING, IT COULD ESCALATE THE WAR.


PEACE IS WORTH ANY RISK, OVERRIDE.
THE OTHER AUTOS QUESTION THEIR COMMANDER IN A MOST DISRESPECTFUL MANNER.
AT THIS STAGE IN HIS CAREER, OPTIMUS IS CLEARLY BUT A YOUNG, FOOLISH JUNIOR OFFICER.
THE OPTIMUS OF TODAY WOULD NEVER ENDANGER AN INNOCENT LIKE BOLTAX!
THEN HE BECAME EVEN MORE FOOLISH WITH AGE!


SOME RISK. WE GOT BUBBLES TO FIGHT. HA!
APPEARANCES CAN BE DECEIVING, DOGFIGHT, ESPECIALLY AS WE NEAR BOLTAX.
AW, YOU'RE TOO SUSPICIOUS, OP--


--AARRGH!!
A MOLTEN MERCURY MINEFIELD!
SPLOOSH
NO PROBLEM!


I CAN EASILY SLIP PAST THESE GEYSERS!
AND NOW THAT I'VE MADE IT TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS FIELD...


... A BURST FROM MY PARTICLE BEAM CANNONS SHOULD REVEAL THE FEEDER PIPE.
BWAM
THERE. THAT'LL SHUT OFF THE MERCURY FLOW.
BLAST! OVERRIDE SAVED THOSE AUTOBOT FOOLS!
OF COURSE. IF HE HADN'T, WE'D NEVER SEE WHAT OPTIMUS PRIME FINDS OUT FROM BOLTAX.
A CABLE JUNGLE!
I DON'T LIKE THE LOOKS OF THIS.
WE HAVE NO CHOICE. THIS IS THE WAY TO BOLTAX.
THE JUNGLE'S ATTACKING!
WE'RE TRAPPED!
SPEAK FOR YOURSELVES! IT HASN'T CAUGHT ME YET!

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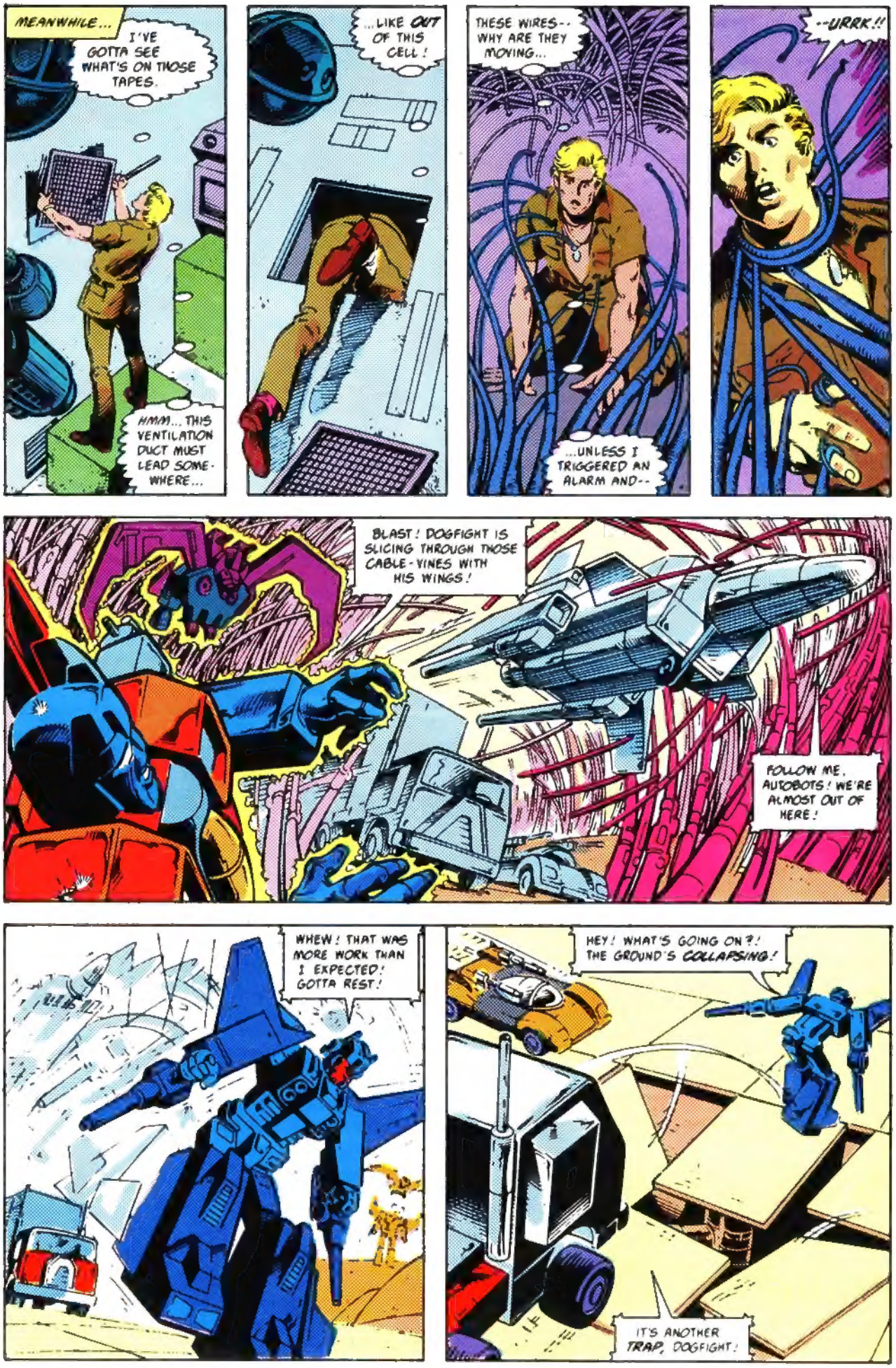
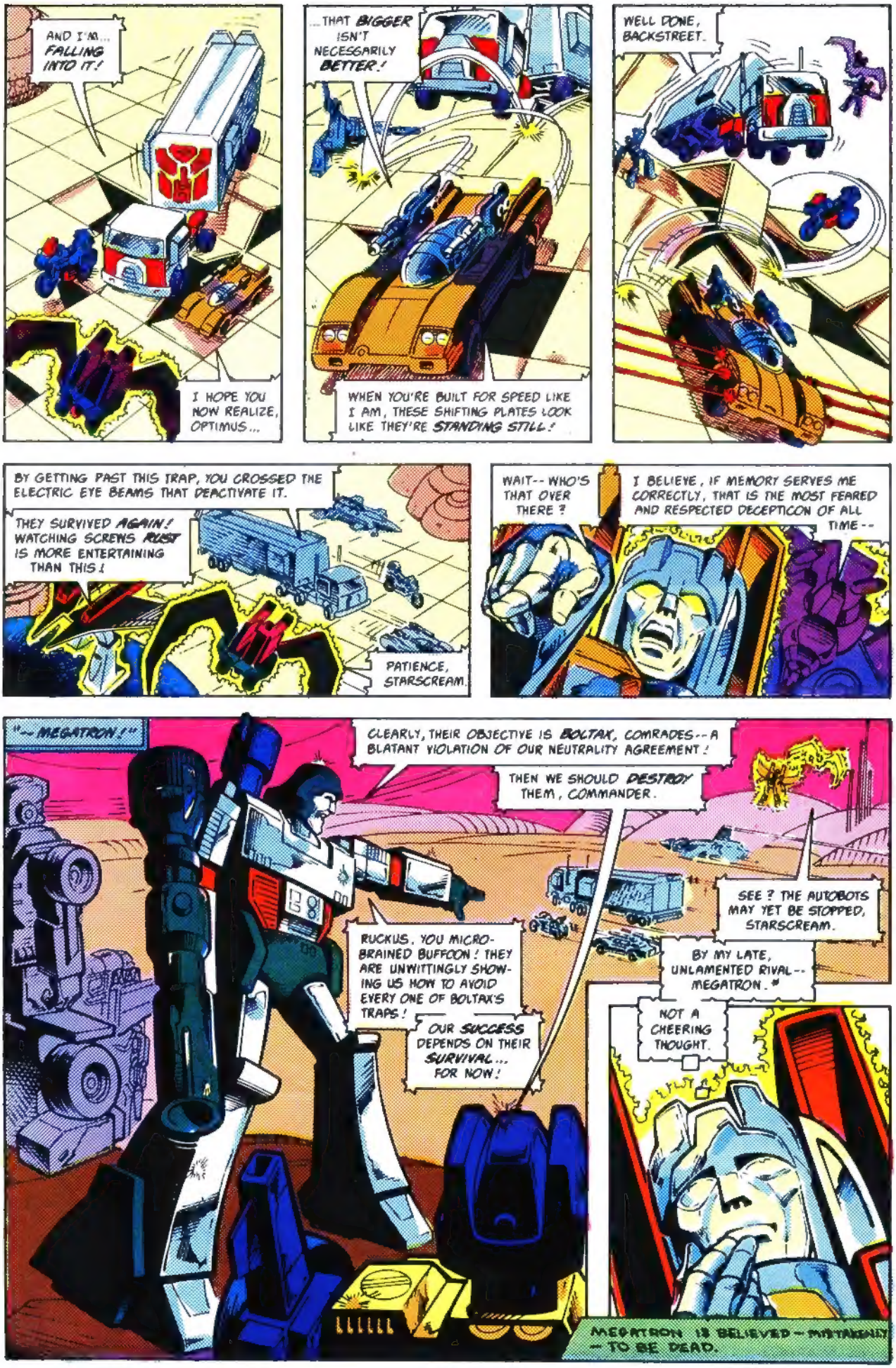
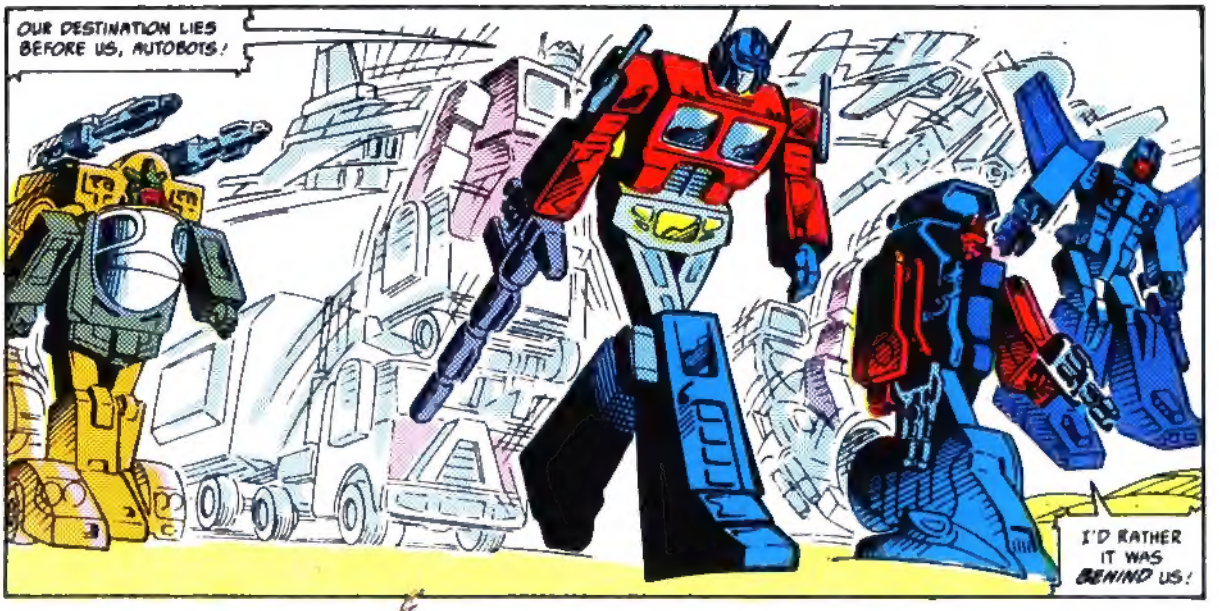
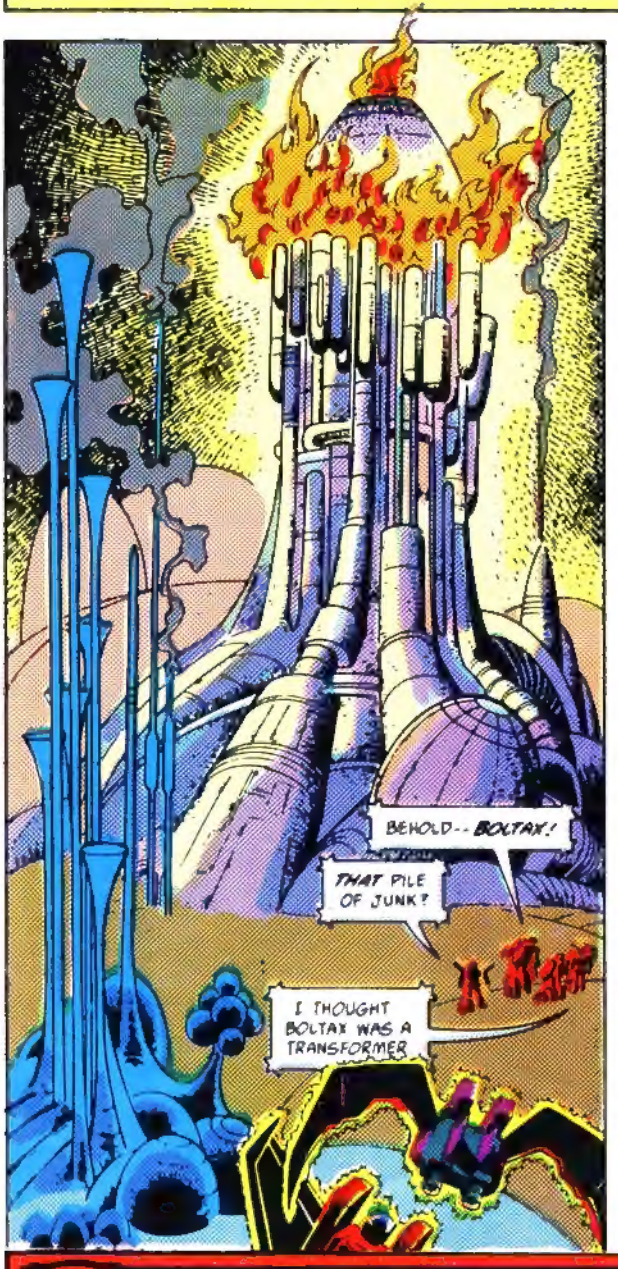
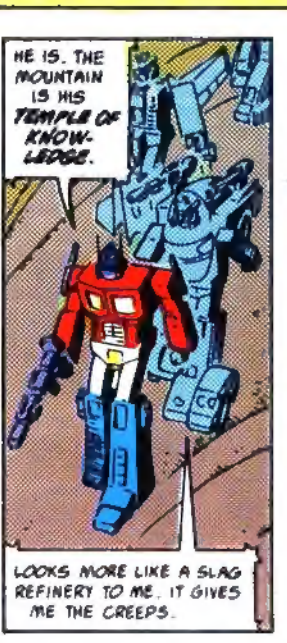
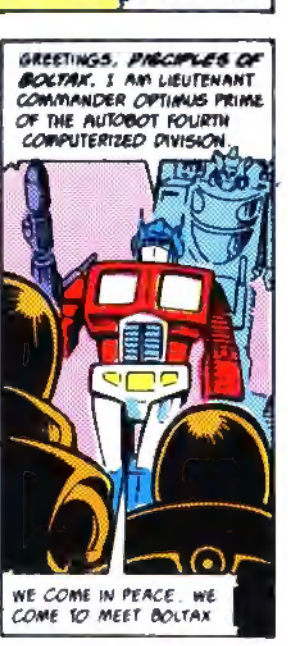

MEANWHILE...
I'VE GOTTA SEE WHAT'S ON THOSE TAPES.
HMM... THIS VENTILATION DUCT MUST LEAD SOMEWHERE...
...LIKE OUT OF THIS CELL!
THESE WIRES-- WHY ARE THEY MOVING...
...UNLESS I TRIGGERED AN ALARM AND--
--URRK!!
BLAST! DOGFIGHT IS SLICING THROUGH THOSE CABLE-VINES WITH HIS WINGS!
FOLLOW ME, AUTOBOTS! WE'RE ALMOST OUT OF HERE!
WHEW! THAT WAS MORE WORK THAN I EXPECTED! GOTTA REST!
HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON?! THE GROUND'S COLLAPSING!
IT'S ANOTHER TRAP, DOGFIGHT!

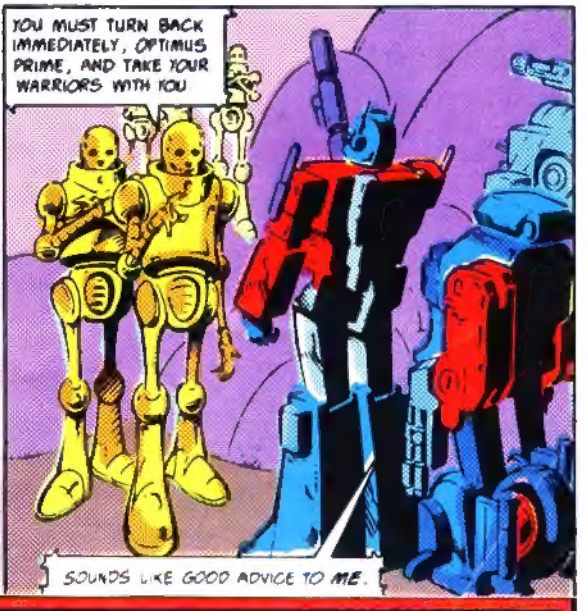

AND I'M... FALLING INTO IT!
I HOPE YOU NOW REALIZE, OPTIMUS...
...THAT BIGGER ISN'T NECESSARILY BETTER!
WHEN YOU'RE BUILT FOR SPEED LIKE I AM, THESE SHIFTING PLATES LOOK LIKE THEY'RE STANDING STILL!
WELL DONE, BACKSTREET.
BY GETTING PAST THIS TRAP, YOU CROSSED THE ELECTRIC EYE BEAMS THAT DEACTIVATE IT.
THEY SURVIVED AGAIN! WATCHING SCREWS RUST IS MORE ENTERTAINING THAN THIS!
PATIENCE, STARSCREAM.
WAIT-- WHO'S THAT OVER THERE?
I BELIEVE, IF MEMORY SERVES ME CORRECTLY, THAT IS THE MOST FEARED AND RESPECTED DECEPTICON OF ALL TIME--
"--MEGATRON!"
CLEARLY, THEIR OBJECTIVE IS BOLTAX, COMRADES--A BLATANT VIOLATION OF OUR NEUTRALITY AGREEMENT!
THEN WE SHOULD DESTROY THEM, COMMANDER.
SEE? THE AUTOBOTS MAY YET BE STOPPED, STARSCREAM.
BY MY LATE, UNLAMENTED RIVAL-- MEGATRON.*
NOT A CHEERING THOUGHT.
RUCKUS, YOU MICRO-BRAINED BUFFOON! THEY ARE UNWITTINGLY SHOWING US HOW TO AVOID EVERY ONE OF BOLTAX'S TRAPS!
OUR SUCCESS DEPENDS ON THEIR SURVIVAL... FOR NOW!
MEGATRON IS BELIEVED — MISTAKENLY — TO BE DEAD.








GREETINGS, PRINCIPLES OF BOLTAX. I AM LIEUTENANT COMMANDER OPTIMUS PRIME OF THE AUTOBOT FOURTH COMPUTERIZED DIVISION.
WE COME IN PEACE. WE COME TO MEET BOLTAX



NEXT: UP GOES UNDERBASE!

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THE TRANSFORMERS™

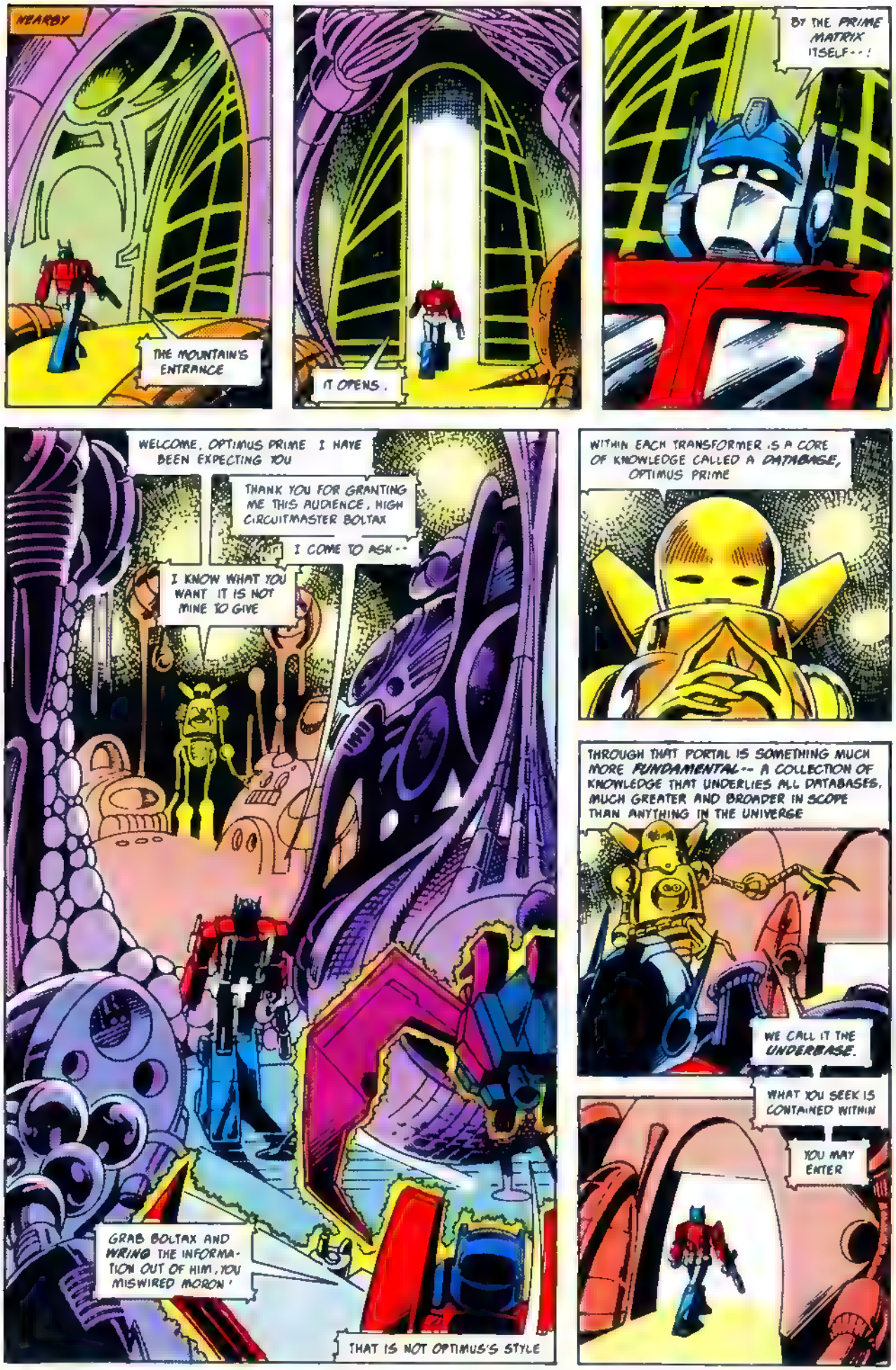
and

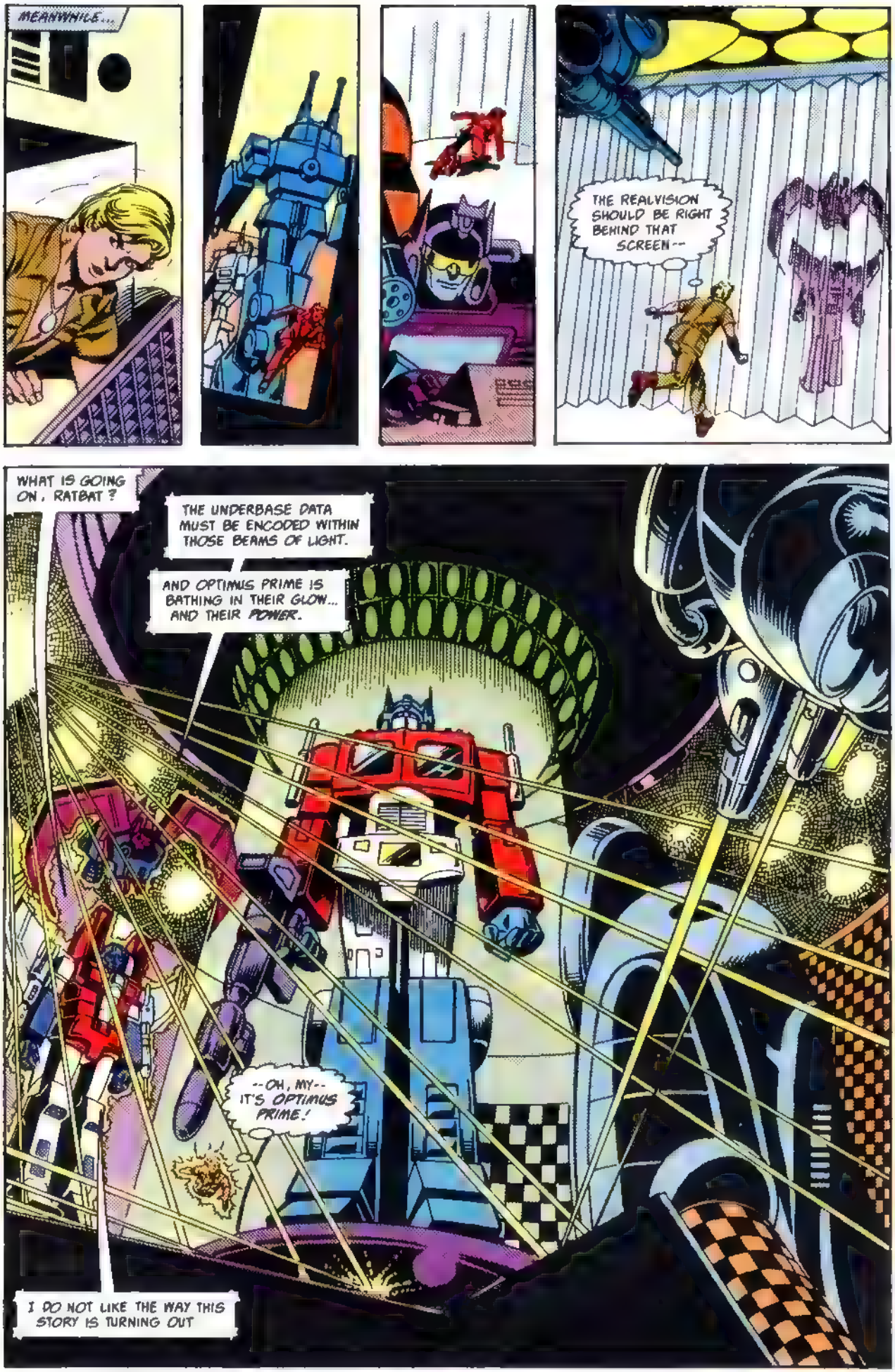
ACTION FORCE™

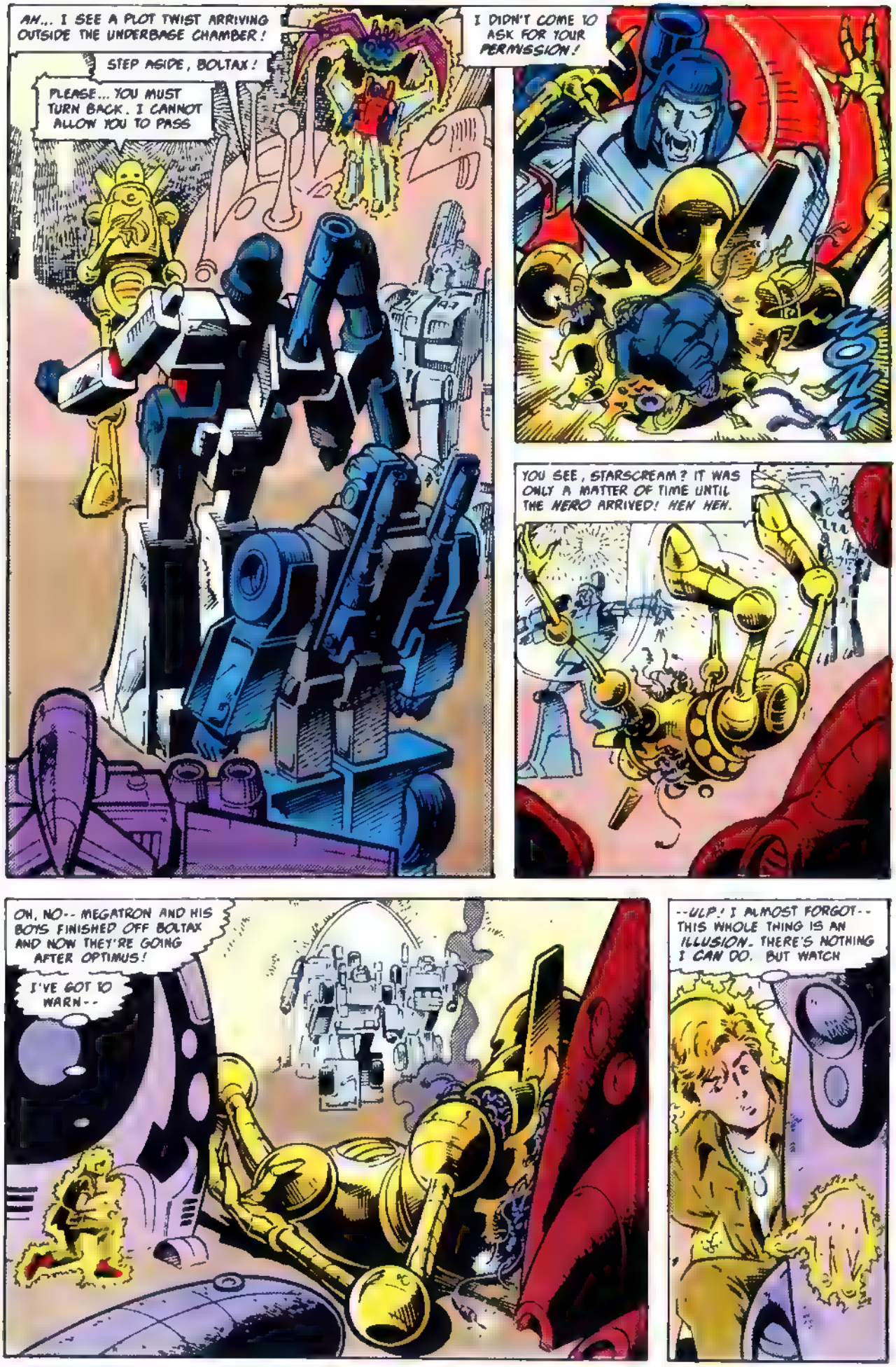
BLAST FROM THE PAST!

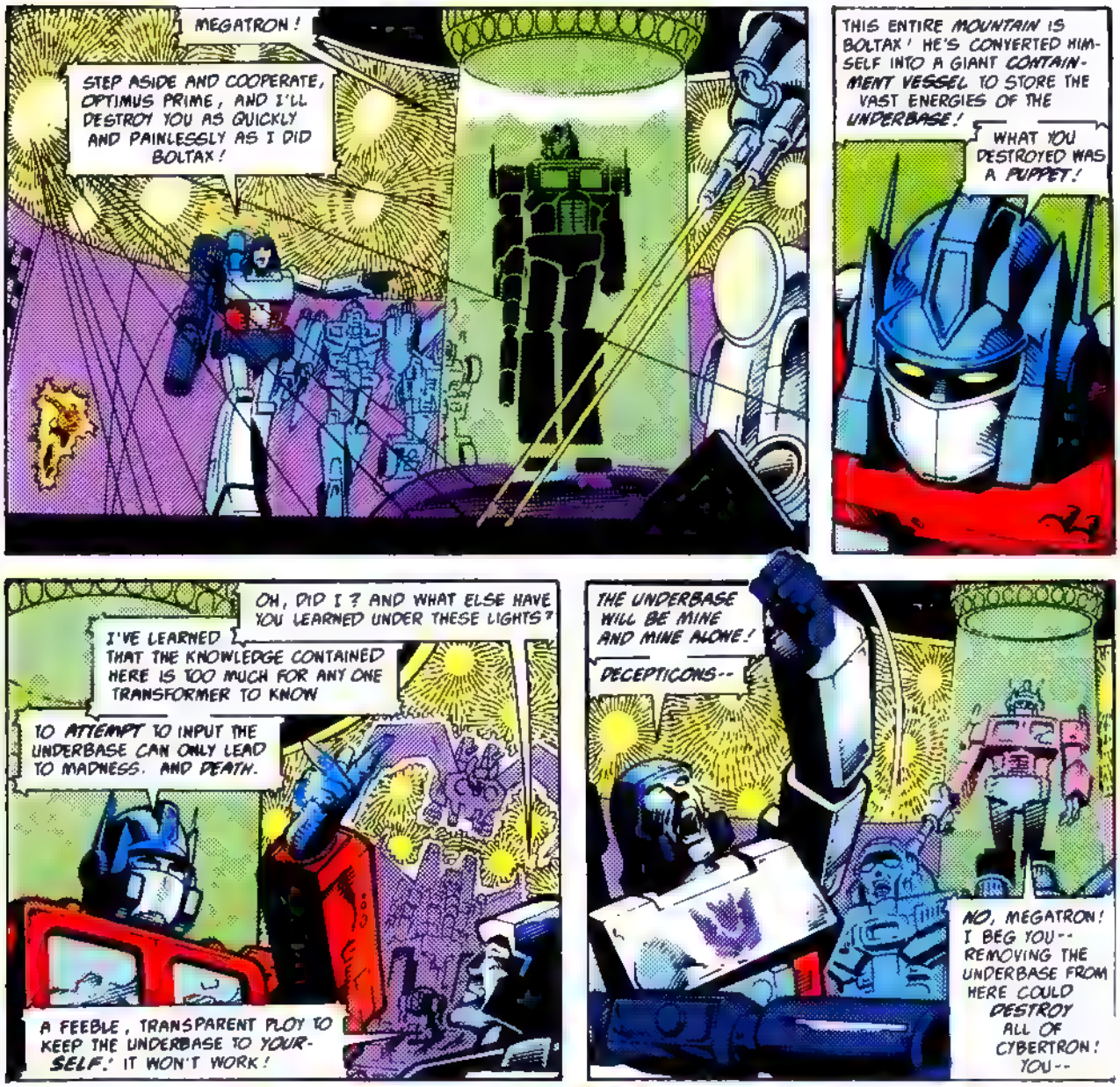
PAIN AND SUFFERING WILL BE YOURS IF YOU STAY
HEY NO ONE THREATENS ME AND GETS AWAY WITH IT
CALM DOWN, BACKSTREET THESE DISCIPLES POSE NO THREAT THEY ARE NON-VIOLENT
WE JUST HEAR THEM OUT
OUR SWORN DEVOTION IS TO KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING WAR HAS NO PLACE HERE
THOSE WHO PRACTICE IT INVITE TERMINATION-- COMPLETE AND UTTER!
IF THAT IS THE CASE I HAVEN'T THE RIGHT TO PUT MY SOLDIERS AT RISK
YOU THREE WILL SET UP CAMP OUTSIDE THIS VALLEY AND AWAIT MY RETURN
FINE I HATE GOING WHERE I'M NOT WANTED
WHO WANTS TO FIGHT A BUNCH OF SKINNY PIPE CLEANERS ANYWAY?
GOOD LUCK COMMANDER
YOU ARE SINCERE OPTIMUS PRIME... AND WISE IN YOUR OWN WAY
BUT YOU ARE A FOOL NOT TO TAKE WITH THE OTHERS
REGRETTABLY THE ONLY WAY TO DETER YOU FROM YOUR QUEST IS TO ALLOW YOU TO CONTINUE ON IT
YOU MAY PROCEED
OPS ALONE LET'S JUMP HIM
NOT YET CRANKCASE OUR CHANCE WILL COME
THIS IS GETTING GOOD OPS IS THE ONLY TRANSFORMER I HATE MORE THAN MEGATRON AND OPS ARE TO GET CLOBBERED!

MEANWHILE
URRRK!!
OH CHOKING EVERY TIME I MOVE ... THEY PULL TIGHTER
MAYBE THAT'S IT WIRES MUST BE PROGRAMMED TO STOP ANYTHING THAT MOVES
SO I'LL STOP MOVING
GASP! THEY'RE PULLING BACK!
WHICH GIVES ME A CHANCE TO LEAP PAST 'EM!
AND BACK IN REALVISION
GREETINGS, DISCIPLES OF BOLTAX I AM MEGATRON.
YOU MUST TURN BACK IMMEDIATELY, MEGATRON, AND TAKE YOUR WARRIORS WITH YOU
PAIN AND SUFFERING WILL BE YOURS IF YOU STAY
ON THE CONTRARY MY DEAR DISCIPLES
WE BRING THOSE GIFTS TO YOU!
BAWHOOM


NEARBY
THE MOUNTAIN'S ENTRANCE
IT OPENS.
BY THE PRIME MATRIX ITSELF--!
WELCOME, OPTIMUS PRIME I HAVE BEEN EXPECTING YOU
THANK YOU FOR GRANTING ME THIS AUDIENCE, HIGH CIRCUITMASTER BOLTAX
I COME TO ASK--
I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT IT IS NOT MINE TO GIVE
GRAB BOLTAX AND WRING THE INFORMATION OUT OF HIM, YOU MISWIRED MORON!
THAT IS NOT OPTIMUS'S STYLE
WITHIN EACH TRANSFORMER IS A CORE OF KNOWLEDGE CALLED A DATABASE, OPTIMUS PRIME
THROUGH THAT PORTAL IS SOMETHING MUCH MORE FUNDAMENTAL-- A COLLECTION OF KNOWLEDGE THAT UNDERLIES ALL DATABASES, MUCH GREATER AND BROADER IN SCOPE THAN ANYTHING IN THE UNIVERSE
WE CALL IT THE UNDERBASE.
WHAT YOU SEEK IS CONTAINED WITHIN
YOU MAY ENTER


MEANWHILE...
THE REALVISION SHOULD BE RIGHT BEHIND THAT SCREEN--
WHAT IS GOING ON, RATBAT?
THE UNDERBASE DATA MUST BE ENCODED WITHIN THOSE BEAMS OF LIGHT.
AND OPTIMUS PRIME IS BATHING IN THEIR GLOW... AND THEIR POWER.
--OH, MY-- IT'S OPTIMUS PRIME!
I DO NOT LIKE THE WAY THIS STORY IS TURNING OUT

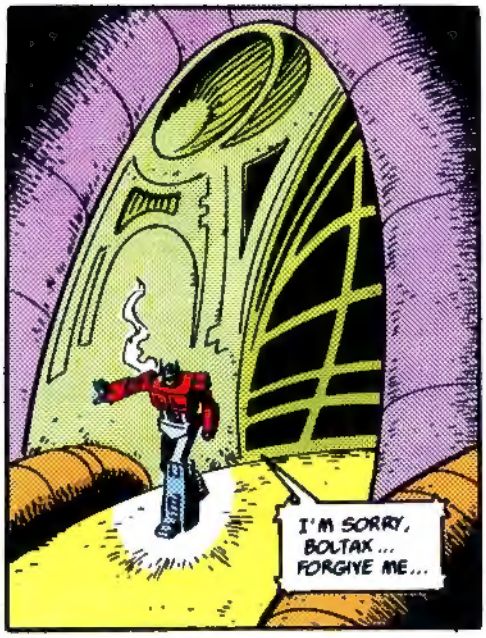

AH... I SEE A PLOT TWIST ARRIVING OUTSIDE THE UNDERBASE CHAMBER!
STEP ASIDE, BOLTAX!
PLEASE... YOU MUST TURN BACK. I CANNOT ALLOW YOU TO PASS
I DIDN'T COME TO ASK FOR YOUR PERMISSION!
WONK
YOU SEE, STARSCREAM? IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL THE HERO ARRIVED! HEH HEH.
OH, NO-- MEGATRON AND HIS BOYS FINISHED OFF BOLTAX AND NOW THEY'RE GOING AFTER OPTIMUS!
I'VE GOT TO WARN--
--ULP! I ALMOST FORGOT-- THIS WHOLE THING IS AN ILLUSION. THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO. BUT WATCH

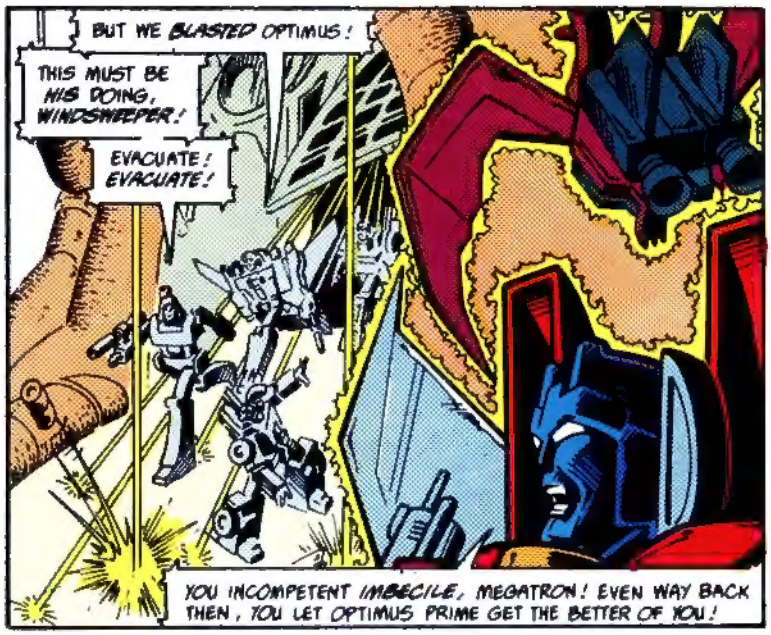

MEGATRON!
STEP ASIDE AND COOPERATE, OPTIMUS PRIME, AND I'LL DESTROY YOU AS QUICKLY AND PAINLESSLY AS I DID BOLTAX!
THIS ENTIRE MOUNTAIN IS BOLTAX! HE'S CONVERTED HIMSELF INTO A GIANT CONTAINMENT VESSEL TO STORE THE VAST ENERGIES OF THE UNDERBASE!
WHAT YOU DESTROYED WAS A PUPPET!
OH, DID I? AND WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU LEARNED UNDER THESE LIGHTS?
I'VE LEARNED THAT THE KNOWLEDGE CONTAINED HERE IS TOO MUCH FOR ANY ONE TRANSFORMER TO KNOW
TO ATTEMPT TO INPUT THE UNDERBASE CAN ONLY LEAD TO MADNESS. AND DEATH.
A FEEBLE, TRANSPARENT PLOY TO KEEP THE UNDERBASE TO YOURSELF. IT WON'T WORK!
THE UNDERBASE WILL BE MINE AND MINE ALONE!
DECEPTICONS--
NO, MEGATRON! I BEG YOU-- REMOVING THE UNDERBASE FROM HERE COULD DESTROY ALL OF CYBERTRON! YOU--
KA-BOOM
--FIRE!!
I LOVE A HAPPY ENDING! HA HA!
OPTIMUS!

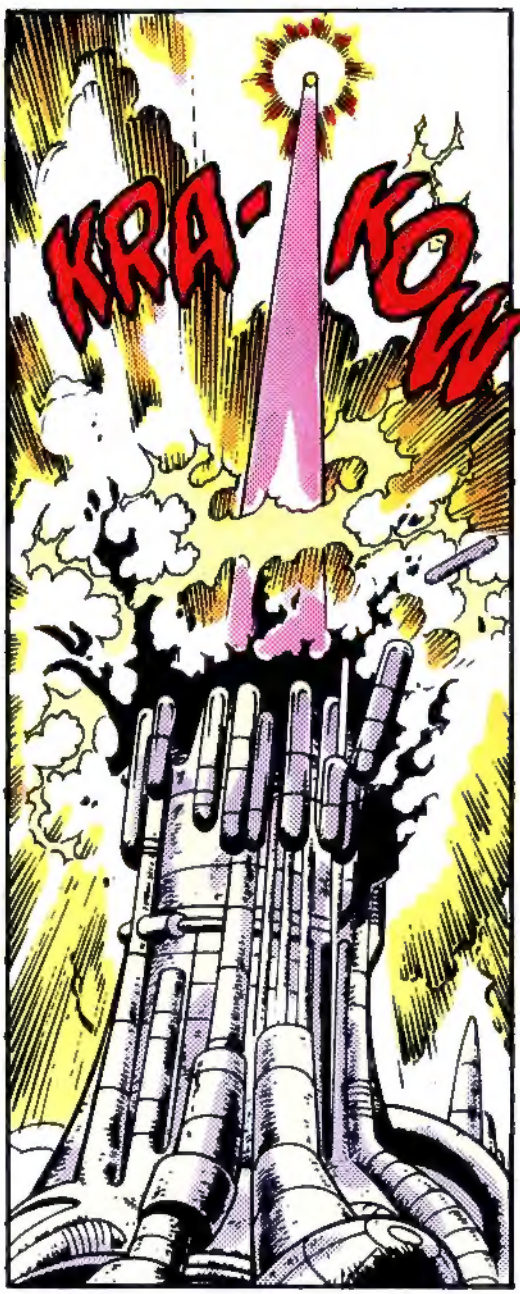
CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

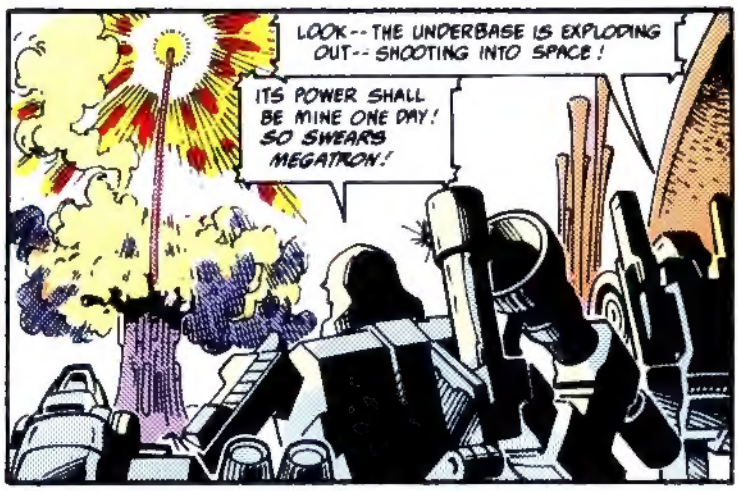
AT LAST! WITH OPTIMUS PRIME DEAD- NOTHING CAN STOP ME!

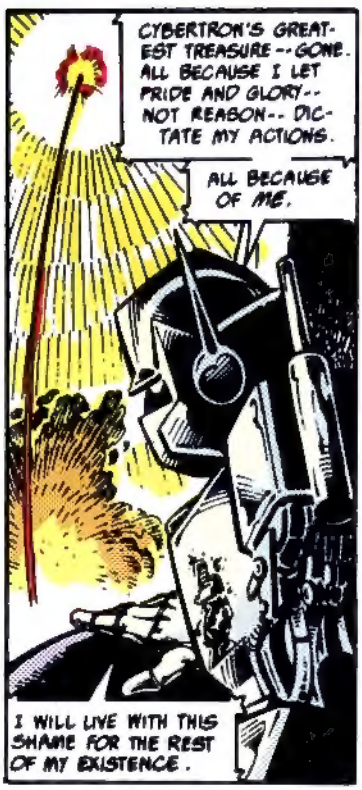
WITH ULTIMATE KNOWLEDGE COMES ULTIMATE POWER, DECEPTICONS -- AND THAT KNOWLEDGE IS MINE FOR THE TAKING!
THE AUTOBOTS OF CYBERTRON ARE AS GOOD AS TERMINATED!
LOOK! OPTIMUS PRIME STILL FUNCTIONS!
MEGATRON, YOU IDIOT! SHUT UP AND TURN AROUND!
BUT OF COURSE, STARSCREAM'S WORDS GO UNHEARD...
... AND OPTIMUS PRIME STAGGERS UNSEEN TO THE OUTER CHAMBER.
BOLTAX IS AN IRREPLACEABLE TREASURE -- I CAN'T DESTROY IT. BUT IF I DON'T... IT WILL BE LOST TO MEGATRON, ANYWAY.
DOING NOTHING WOULD BE WORSE THAN DESTROYING IT.
THIS CONSOLE... MUST CONTROL THE MOUNTAIN'S OPERATION
IF MY GUESS IS RIGHT... THE FLAMES ESCAPING THE MOUNTAIN'S OUTER VENTS...
... ARE THE EXCESS ENERGY OF THE UNDERBASE BURNING OFF.
THIS SHOULD CLOSE...
... MOST OF THE VENTS... CAUSING AN ENERGY BUILD-UP INSIDE.
MEGATRON -- WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
THE CHAMBER SEEMS TO BE OVERLOADING -- REACHING A CRITICAL MASS! BUT HOW?!
OPTIMUS PRIME -- HE'S GONE!

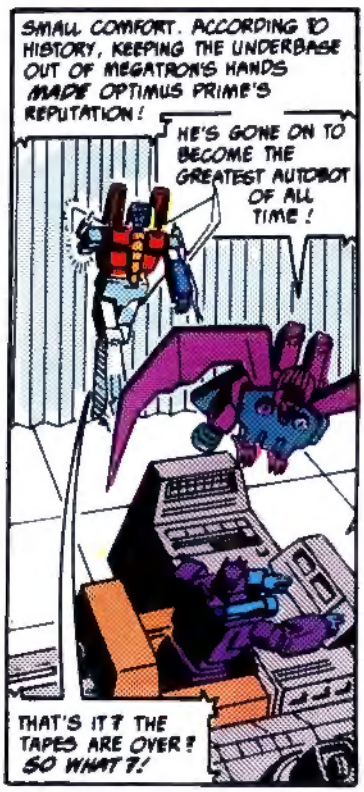

I'M SORRY, BOLTAX... FORGIVE ME...


BUT WE BLASTED OPTIMUS!
THIS MUST BE HIS DOING, WINDSHEEPER!
EVACUATE! EVACUATE!
YOU INCOMPETENT IMBECILE, MEGATRON! EVEN WAY BACK THEN, YOU LET OPTIMUS PRIME GET THE BETTER OF YOU!

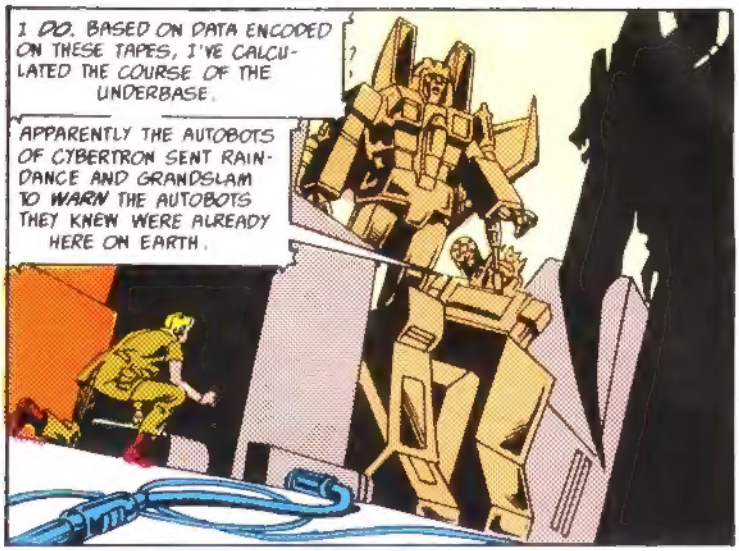

KRA-KOW

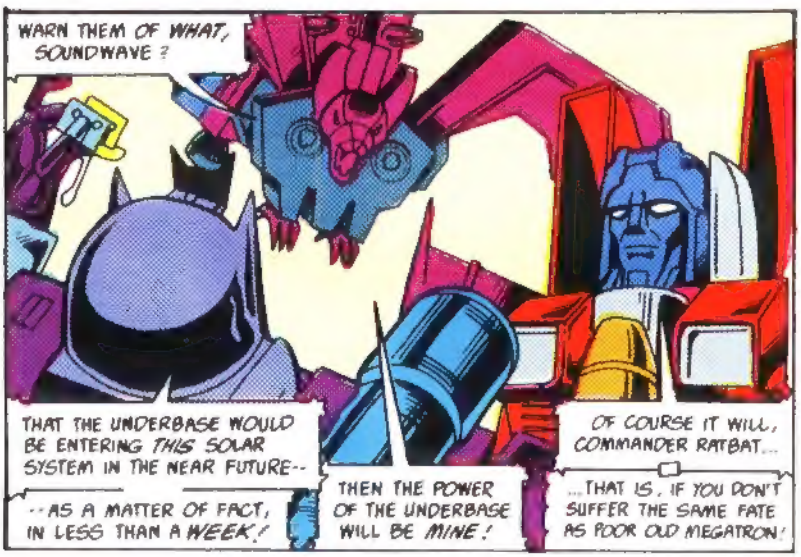

LOOK--THE UNDERBASE IS EXPLODING OUT--SHOOTING INTO SPACE!
ITS POWER SHALL BE MINE ONE DAY! SO SWEARS MEGATRON!

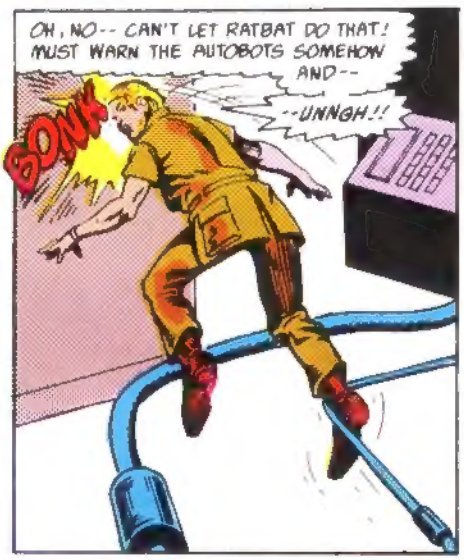

CYBERTRON'S GREATEST TREASURE--GONE. ALL BECAUSE I LET PRIDE AND GLORY--NOT REASON--DICTATE MY ACTIONS.
ALL BECAUSE OF ME.
I WILL LIVE WITH THIS SHAME FOR THE REST OF MY EXISTENCE.

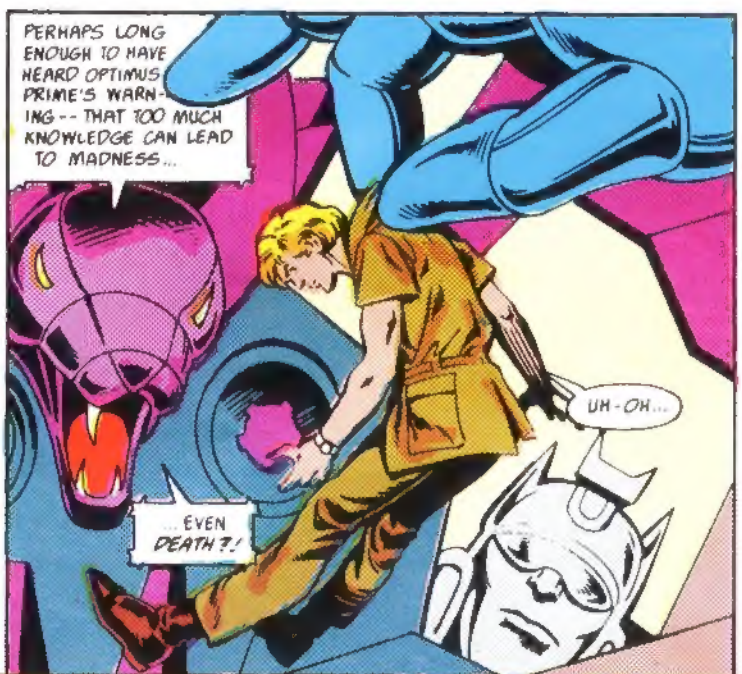

SMALL COMFORT. ACCORDING TO HISTORY, KEEPING THE UNDERBASE OUT OF MEGATRON'S HANDS MADE OPTIMUS PRIME'S REPUTATION!
HE'S GONE ON TO BECOME THE GREATEST AUTOBOT OF ALL TIME!
THAT'S IT? THE TAPES ARE OVER? SO WHAT?!

THE EXISTENCE OF THE UNDERBASE HAD RECEDED INTO MYTH. THE TAPES PROVE IT IS A REALITY...
...AND HAS BEEN TRAVELING THROUGH SPACE FOR EONS.
SO? WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH US? HERE?! TODAY?!
I DO NOT KNOW...


I DO. BASED ON DATA ENCODED ON THESE TAPES, I'VE CALCULATED THE COURSE OF THE UNDERBASE.
APPARENTLY THE AUTOBOTS OF CYBERTRON SENT RAINDANCE AND GRANDSLAM TO WARN THE AUTOBOTS THEY KNEW WERE ALREADY HERE ON EARTH.


WARN THEM OF WHAT, SOUNDWAVE?
THAT THE UNDERBASE WOULD BE ENTERING THIS SOLAR SYSTEM IN THE NEAR FUTURE--
--AS A MATTER OF FACT, IN LESS THAN A WEEK!
THEN THE POWER OF THE UNDERBASE WILL BE MINE!
OF COURSE IT WILL, COMMANDER RATBAT...
...THAT IS, IF YOU DON'T SUFFER THE SAME FATE AS POOR OLD MEGATRON!





NEXT: COLD COMFORT AND JOY!